

Plate 3: Bilingual writ of Henry I

By contrast with the writ illustrated in plate 2, this one was probably written not by a king's scribe but by a monk of Canterbury. Its ostensible purpose is to confirm to Archbishop Anselm and to the monks of Christ Church their ancient rights of sac and soc, toll and team, etc. The text is in both Latin and English (the English starts at line 8). As much of the Latin text consists of English formulas (*on strande & streame, on wudu & felde*, etc., line 3), the bilingualism is largely superfluous. These alliterative formulas reach back to the oral recitations of remembrancers. Canterbury's bilingual writs seem to be an attempt to put this traditional lore, superficially Latinized, into a written form acceptable to the Norman government. The reasons for thinking that this writ is not a product of the royal Chancery are that the seal (now damaged) is eccentrically attached on the left-hand side (where the tongue projects), the parchment is too thick, and the style of script is book hand. A note on another exemplar of this writ states that it was originally produced in quadruplicate. It is thus a throwback to pre-Conquest practice, when great monastic houses (occasionally at least) wrote out for themselves copies of title-deeds in the king's name and then got the royal seal affixed to them.

The British Library Board. BL Campbell Charter xxix. 5. Dimensions 32 cm × 14 cm. Date c.1103–9 (RRA-N II, p. 72, no. 840). Transcript: *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* xxix (1873), p. 242. Comment: D. A. E. Pelteret, *Catalogue of English Post-Conquest Vernacular Documents* (1990), p. 73, no. 46.

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